

# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL Monterey, California



## THESIS

**ROMA IN EASTERN EUROPE: ETHNIC POLICY AND  
SECURITY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC, SLOVAKIA, AND  
ROMANIA**

by

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December 1998

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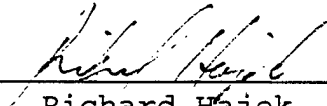
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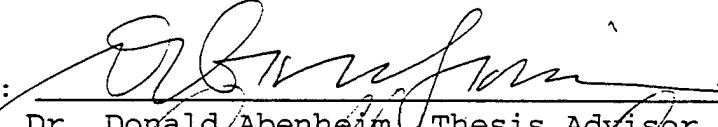
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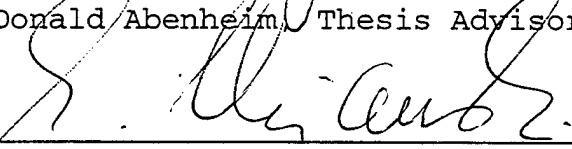
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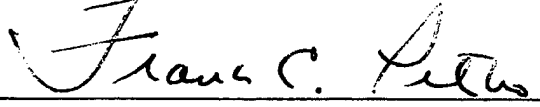
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## ABSTRACT

From the time Roma arrived in Europe during the Middle Ages, their presence has often resulted in friction with the other peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. This generalization and indigenous attitude applies today. Due to the Roma's unique culture, customs, language, and social structure, they are not integrated into Central and Eastern European society. Moreover, Roma are a target of racial bias and discrimination, especially during times of social and political turmoil. At the turn of the century, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Romania are all undergoing tremendous change, with the Roma as a focus for society's ills. Security problems, arising therefrom, include migration, high demographic birthrate, illiteracy, unemployment, and criminal behavior. Therefore an effective program of integrating Roma into the new democracies is necessary. The new democracies must also improve minority rights in order to join European security and economic organizations. Membership is essential for the survival of democracy in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Romania.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

At the close of the century, a new dawn of hope emerged. Democracy triumphed and is flourishing throughout the world. Walls are coming down; the iron curtain in Berlin is demolished. National borders are no longer armed bastions; instead commerce and free transit are encouraged. Except for the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. A wall is being built in Usti nad Labern, Czech Republic, to separate the Roma from the whites. The formation of Roma ghettos is prevalent in Slovakia. Skinheads groups harass and beat Roma, sometimes to death, and destroy Roma property. In restaurants there appear "NO GYPSY" signs, and in employment advertisements, "no gypsy need apply" is common. Roma are denied citizenship in a state they have lived in for generations. The time is not 1936 in Germany, but 1998 in Central and Eastern Europe.

The new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe are undergoing a struggle for identity, after years of communist government. Democracy is encouraged, but xenophobic nationalism is evident in Central and Eastern Europe. Democratic expression, combined with social and economic disruption, produces extremes, extremes that are expressed in racial intolerance. The Roma are convenient scapegoats, a political foil for economic ills. The rise



of racism and discrimination does not bode well for democratic growth. A Central or Eastern European state that condones such behavior will be ostracized by the European community. The state will be a pariah in Europe, unable to join any European security or economic organization. Thus the state's economy and democratic growth will never improve and it will remain isolated among others of its kind. This will result in a gray zone of security instability in Central and Eastern Europe, and stagnation of democratic improvement.

#### **A. WHO ARE THE ROMA?**

The Roma are Gypsies. Roma is the name they prefer to call themselves and the appellation Roma is in common use today. The term, Gypsy, carried negative memories by both the Roma and non-Roma, and was applied to any nomadic people. Thus in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the term Roma emerged in order to escape this general classification. This new term also marks the struggle for recognition as a nation. Roma have been present in Europe since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. They represent a growing minority population in every state in Europe, especially in Central and Eastern Europe where their numbers are estimated at eight million.<sup>1</sup> Population

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<sup>1</sup> "The Roma People," accessed on 11 August 1998, available from <http://www.unionromani.org/puebloin.htm>; Internet, 5.

differs in each state, with Romania having the largest Roma population, Slovakia the densest, and the Czech Republic resting somewhere in between. The Roma are mostly young and have a far higher birthrate than the majority population in Central and Eastern Europe. This minority is mostly illiterate, uneducated, and unemployed. Yet they enjoy a distinct culture.<sup>2</sup> Identification as a Rom is usually in the form of identification of who is not a Rom. To the Roma all others are *gadze*, the most common term for non-Roma in the many Rom dialects.<sup>3</sup> Identification is made from within the Roma, not externally through a majority.

The Roma in Eastern and Central Europe form a growing population, beset by a history of social ills. All of this is the cause of security problems, both internal and external, in Romania, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Externally, through migration and immigration, internally, through social maladjustment, and as a focus of racism and discrimination. Such societal problems with the Roma are historical, but are now receiving international attention as Romania, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic transform from communism to democracy.

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<sup>2</sup> Clebert, Jean-Paul, *The Gypsies*, (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1963), 132.

<sup>3</sup> Fraser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 8.

## B. NATIONALITY OR ETHNIC MINORITY?

Whether a state classifies the Roma as a nationality or an ethnic minority, or as merely a social group, such a judgement can affect the social position of the Roma in a state. If classified as a nationality, then certain rights are accorded by this state, even on the international level. Nationality status is accorded if the group has a common culture, language, and territory. The Roma meet these standards in culture, almost in language, but not in territory. The Roma left India during the 13<sup>th</sup> century as a united nation. When they arrived in Europe they were still a united nation, linked by a language and culture, but not possessing a territory, a situation akin to early Hebrews in Egypt at the time of Exodus. After their arrival in Europe, they dispersed and became less identified as a nation, but retained ethnic identity. One definition of a minority is a distinct group, living within a state, dominated by other groups.<sup>4</sup> Such is the Roma's present situation in Central and Eastern Europe, except for Romania, which has been reluctant to grant minority status

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<sup>4</sup> Micewski, Edwin, "Ethnic and Religious Minorities Within the Military – Current Situation and Possible Solutions," in *Minorities and Armed Forces: Symposium in Wein, 21.-25. April 1997*, by the National Defence Academy, (Vienna: National Defence Academy, 1997), 12.

to Roma.<sup>5</sup> As an ethnic minority, Roma are entitled to the same rights as the majority, including use of their own language. The social situation for the Roma has varied from attempts at assimilation, the process of the majority absorbing the minority and not changing itself, to paternalistic attempts at integration.<sup>6</sup> Integration is a gradual process and the minority is allowed to maintain its identity while becoming a functional and supporting member of the state. Assimilation is resisted by the Roma, as is integration.<sup>7</sup> The Roma maintain a closed culture, inhibiting attempts at inclusion within society.<sup>8</sup> The question of nationality or ethnic minority is still open. In either case, the Roma's reluctance to accept the state, or be accepted by the state, has caused security issues in the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe.

#### C. PERCEPTIONS AND MISPERCEPTIONS

Perceptions and misperceptions about the Roma abound. The popular image in the West is the romanticized version of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A carefree caravan of Gypsies, roaming the countryside, a Gypsy that wears Spanish Gypsy

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<sup>5</sup> Fox, Jonathan, "Roma (Gypsies) in Romania," accessed on 30 July 1998, available from <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar/runroma.htm>; Internet, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Cashmore, Ellis, *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations*, Third Edition, (London: Routledge, 1994), 37.

<sup>7</sup> Hancock, Ian, *The Pariah Syndrome*, (Ann Arbor: Karoma Publishers, Inc., 1987), 130.

<sup>8</sup> Fraser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, 305.

dress, traveling in an English caravan, and playing Hungarian Gypsy music.<sup>9</sup> In Central and Eastern Europe the image consists of dirty, unkempt Gypsies, robbing and stealing the countryside.<sup>10</sup> The nomadic version of the Gypsy is popular, and defies the present situation where only about ten percent of Roma are nomadic. Every other minority, or group of people, who are nomadic are classified as Gypsies.<sup>11</sup> Nomadic traits are applied even to Roma engaged in seasonal work, that requires travel, and the established trend of urban migration. The perception of criminal, unemployed, and uneducated Roma is in many cases accurate. Roma sit precariously between rejection from society and centuries of oppression and the curse of in a low literacy rate and subsequent high-unemployment. Central and Eastern European employers are unwilling to hire Roma and they are thus forced into subsistence stealing in order to live.<sup>12</sup> An accurate perception of unemployment is maintained due to the misperception that Roma do not desire a normal lifestyle, contrary to the

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<sup>9</sup> Hancock, Ian, *The Pariah Syndrome*, 116.

<sup>10</sup> Liegeois, Jean-Pierre and Gheorghe, Nicolae, "Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority," *Minority Rights Group international Report*, 95/4, 12.

<sup>11</sup> Hancock, Ian, "Anti-Gypsyism," *The Patrin Web Journal*, accessed on 30 July 1998, available from <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/antigypsyism.htm>; Internet, 8.

<sup>12</sup> Hancock, Ian, *The Pariah Syndrome*, 122.

actual condition of lack of unemployment due to hiring bias. Due to misperceptions and perceptions the Roma are not thought by Central and Eastern Europe as potential productive citizens and a distinct ethnic group, but rather as a deviant group that must be reintegrated into society. Negative Central and Eastern European attitudes prevent a carefully developed program of integration that would include the culture of the Roma in the process. The states of Central and Eastern Europe are currently facing these misperceptions and perceptions in their treatment of the Roma, accentuated by economic and social disorientation caused by the transition to democracy.

#### **D. HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS**

In the present, international organizations can have a significant effect on a state's policy and treatment of minorities. Such states as Romania, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia have a past that is not easy to reconcile with the fate of the Roma made worse by economic and social problems of transition to democracy. Minority affairs may not be a priority in a new democracy; survival of the state may take precedence. However in the development and sustainment of democracy a comprehensive approach must be considered, with time and resources allotted to social aspects of transition, especially in minority rights. A

major concern of new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe is membership in European security and economic organizations. Without membership their security status is questionable and their economies will fail to reach the European norm.

Human rights organizations can provide a bridge between the state and European security and economic organizations. Working on an international scale within a state, human rights organizations can advise on policy and treatment of minorities throughout the gamut of social policy. Advice is given; avoiding racial bias and discrimination that can affect a state's politicians from arriving at internationally recognized standards for minorities. Advice and monitoring of actual conditions is gained without the pressure of instantly adhering to the standards maintained by European security and economic organizations. Such organizations as the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH), Amnesty International, Minority Rights Watch, and the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights are active in the new democracies.<sup>13</sup>

The International Helsinki Federation produces an annual report on conditions of minorities, with focus on Central

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<sup>13</sup> Liegeois, Jean-Pierre and Gheorghe, Nicolae, "Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority," 15.

and Eastern Europe, providing documentation of actual conditions, advice on solving social problems, and whether or not a state's laws are in concordance with international standards.<sup>14</sup> Such specialist groups as the European Roma Rights Center located in Budapest provide monitoring and assistance in legal affairs. They are especially effective with Roma affairs, are knowledgeable about the history and current situation in the new democracies, and can provide guidance on programs that are manageable and reflect the culture of the state and minority.<sup>15</sup>

Thus human rights organizations serve as guides to eventual membership in European security and economic organizations, providing a stabilizing influence in turbulent times, and assuring that international standards are upheld. Romania, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia are making great progress in treatment of minorities due to the influence of such human rights organizations. Progress is also the result of the new democracies' desire to join European security and economic organizations.

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<sup>14</sup> International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, "Annual Report 1997," accessed on 10 August 1998, available from <http://www.ihf-hr.org/ar97slo.htm>; Internet 1.

<sup>15</sup> Kawczynski, Rudko, "The Politics of Romani Politics," *The Patrin Web Journal*, accessed on 30 July 1998, available from <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/politics.htm>; Internet, 7.



## **E. MEMBERSHIP IN EUROPEAN SECURITY ORGANIZATIONS**

European security organizations are an interlocking entity, not just with security organizations but ties also exist with economic organizations. Initial membership, for a new state, includes the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Next, membership is desirable in the European Union (EU), and in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Additionally there are the Council of Europe and other regional security organizations. Membership in one organization can lead to membership in others and is combined with economic organizations. European security organizations are not just concerned with affairs of defense; they also address a spectrum of social and human rights, with accompanying standards of conduct for a state. For membership in a European security organization, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a state must have a democratic government, and uphold minority rights, as well as participate in collective defense. For membership in the European Union, a state must have a stable economy, but also recognize standards for human rights. Another example is the Council of Europe, whose resolutions on minority rights in education, language, and to prevent

discrimination deserve note.<sup>16</sup> Membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization for the Czech Republic is accompanied with the expectation of adherence to human rights standards (Article II) developed in accord with other members of the organization.<sup>17</sup> Slovakia was denied early entry into the European Union, even though its economy generally met the European Union standards, because of the Meciar regime's human rights abuses and Slovakia's disappointing democratic development.<sup>18</sup> Romania is still grappling with social and economic issues and is in the process of complying with European security organization standards. Thus minority rights are a significant concern in a state's security policy, both internally and externally. The Roma, as a minority in the new democracies, affect the security policy of Romania, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia.

In Central and Eastern Europe, the new democracies are discovering the problems of building a state. A state is composed of many nations and ethnic minorities, not only

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<sup>16</sup> Liegeois, Jean-Pierre and Gheorghe, Nicolae, "Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority," 23.

<sup>17</sup> European Roma Rights Center, "Statement of the ERRC on the Occasion of the Acceptance into NATO of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland," *The Patrín Web Journal*, accessed on 30 July 1998, available from <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/errc-nato.htm>; Internet, 1.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Department of State Background Notes, April 1998, The Slovak Republic," Global News Bank, accessed on 04 August 1998, available from <http://207.87.6.189/bin/gate.exe?f=doc&state=482fj2.2.45>; Internet, 8.

the one the state is named after, as in Slovakia or Romania. In a struggle for identity new states often devolve into nationalism, identification of the state through ethnic means. Nationalism deprives productive minorities of a share in the state and in the building of democracy. In Central and Eastern Europe, nationalism is rampant, minorities are excluded with the Roma singled out as a particularly undesirable minority. The Roma are a convenient political scapegoat for social and economic travail. What follows explains the underlying causes and illuminates the current situation of the "Gypsy problem."

## II. HISTORY OF THE ROMA IN EUROPE

### A. ORIGINS OF THE ROMA

#### 1. Linguistic and Cultural Origins

Determining the linguistic and cultural origins of the Roma has helped explain their peculiar differences and problems of acceptance by European nations. The Romani language has its roots in ancient Punjabi, or Hindi.<sup>19</sup> The language was further modified by the Roma's interaction with various nations and the length of their stay in a particular location. For example, the language contains a great many words of Byzantine Greek, acquired during the Roma's migration westward.<sup>20</sup> The process continues today with regional dialects reflecting the length of stay in one location, for instance, Romania. There are actually three distinct, but related languages in use by the Roma, all influenced by location in Europe. For instance in Western Europe, the language used is Rom, in Eastern Europe, Dom, and in Central Europe, Lom.<sup>21</sup> The use of various languages, despite common roots, has complicated the cause of Romani

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<sup>19</sup> "A Brief History of the Roma," *The Patrin Web Journal*, accessed 11 August 1998, available from <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/history.htm>; Internet, 2.

<sup>20</sup> Hancock, Ian, *The Pariah Syndrome*, 10.

<sup>21</sup> Fraser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, 25.

nationalism, as has the fact that Romani is not a written language.

The cultural origins of the Roma in India and during their later migration have also affected the ability of the Roma to establish recognition as a nation. Presently there are four distinct Rom tribes within the nation as a whole. They are the Kalderash, the Machavaya, the Lavari, and the Churari. Within these groupings are a number of smaller tribes, again influenced by geographic location and often by profession.<sup>22</sup> In Byzantium these sub-divisions expressed their cultural origin by practicing such traditional crafts as blacksmithing and the manufacture of arms.<sup>23</sup> Other scholars have stated that they were employed as entertainers, acrobats, snake charmers, and animal trainers.<sup>24</sup> Still other scholars state that they were employed as farmers and soldiers.<sup>25</sup> Despite conflicting accounts, evidence points to a united nation leaving India, a nation speaking a common language, and arriving in Byzantium. Fragmentation into smaller tribes would occur later, after their arrival in Europe.

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<sup>22</sup> "A Brief History of the Roma," *The Patrin Web Journal*, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Hancock, Ian, *The Pariah Syndrome*, 13.

<sup>24</sup> Fraser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, 48.

<sup>25</sup> "The Roma People," 1.

## 2. Arrival in Europe

The Roma nation started on its second great migration west during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This migration from southwest Asia into Europe is known to the Roma as the *Aresjipe*, a time when the Roma were still united culturally and linguistically.<sup>26</sup> It is not clear when the Roma began to separate into different tribes, based on language or professions, but this transition undoubtedly occurred due to the varying conditions of acceptance from the host populations.<sup>27</sup> Arrival of this alien group in Europe, a group that was different in all aspects including appearance, was confusing to the Europeans. Although valued for their skills, questions of origin were encountered. The Roma were confused with Tatars, due to a difference in skin color and culture. They were also confused with the multitude of wanderers, beggars, and nomads of every type present throughout Europe in the Middle Ages.<sup>28</sup> Whatever the reception, the Roma dispersed rapidly throughout Europe during the next century, maintaining cohesiveness only through linguistic and cultural history.

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<sup>26</sup> "A Brief History of the Roma," *The Patrin Web Journal*, 1.

<sup>27</sup> Hancock, Ian, *The Pariah Syndrome*, 128.

<sup>28</sup> Clebert, Jean-Paul, *The Gypsies*, 30.

## B. ROMA IN THE MIDDLE AGES

### 1. Initial Impressions

The host Christian populations perceived the initial influx of Roma into Europe as a threat. A threat because the Roma were confused with Muslims, who were at war with Christendom.<sup>29</sup> However, they brought valuable skills and a needed labor force to Europe. In this role they filled a position between peasant and master in the feudal society. Work was most often acquired in traditional fields of blacksmithing and other metalworking.<sup>30</sup> The Roma were even trusted enough to make weapons and other war-like material for the Bohemian King Vladislav II (r. 1471-1516).<sup>31</sup> Their value was so great that a gradual process of slavery developed, with the great lords unwilling to let their valuable workers depart. This was especially true in Moldavia and Wallachia, part of present-day Romania.<sup>32</sup> In other parts of Europe they were seen as useful and encouraged to settle, located around such great castles as

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<sup>29</sup> Crowe, David and Kolsti, John, *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, (London: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1991), 4.

<sup>30</sup> Fraser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, 58.

<sup>31</sup> Crowe, David and Kolsti, John, *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, 33.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 61.

Zips in Slovakia.<sup>33</sup> However, the further West the Roma traveled, the more they were viewed as pests, discouraged to settle, and the governments had legislation enacted to prevent further migration.<sup>34</sup> Thus the Roma were valued and tended to settle more in Eastern Europe, while in Western Europe settlement was more difficult. This pattern is reflected in the demographic distribution in present times. The major problem for the Roma during this period was the tendency of the initial welcome to turn into slavery, especially in Romania. The economic value of the Roma was such that both the nobility and the church developed a slavery system for them.<sup>35</sup>

## **2. Involvement with Society**

Initial involvement with the society of the Middle Ages consisted mainly of the practice of trades. There is evidence that in many regions the attitude towards the Roma was one of paternalism.<sup>36</sup> There was a great deal of interaction as well as freedom for the Roma. This paternalism degenerated into slavery as the value of the Roma increased in society. However, except in the West, there was still

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<sup>33</sup> Crowe, David, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 32.

<sup>34</sup> Rehfish, Farnham, *Gypsies, Tinkers and other Travellers*, (London: Academic Press, 1975), 204.

<sup>35</sup> Hancock, Ian, *The Pariah Syndrome*, 16.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 23.



freedom for the Roma to move unrestricted, unhampered by a reputation for trickery and theft. The inability to move further into the lands of the Holy Roman Empire inspired what came to be known as the "Great Trick." A certain tribe of Roma secured letters of safe conduct from Sigismund (r. 1387-1437), the Holy Roman Emperor. These letters stated that the Roma were on a religious pilgrimage, common at that time, and were to be permitted to travel for seven years throughout his realm.<sup>37</sup> This permitted further migration and became one of the sources of mistrust of the Roma, who were seen to have abused their privilege. Still during this time Roma were valued in many parts of Eastern Europe and were protected in Hungary as royal servants.<sup>38</sup> The mistrust engendered by the "Great Trick" and other migrations soon developed into an anti-Roma sentiment through much of the region. Evidence of this growing tide of intolerance is the Moravian expulsion decree in 1538.<sup>39</sup> Followed by anti-Romany legislation in Bohemia following the outbreak of fires in Prague in 1541,

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<sup>37</sup> Fraser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, 62.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. 109.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 112.

blamed on Gypsies.<sup>40</sup> This was followed by the Polish Diet introducing anti-Gypsy laws in 1557. Thus a gradual turn to intolerance and slavery occurred in the Middle Ages, after an initial confusing, but relatively peaceful and prosperous welcome to Europe. The anti-Gypsy legislation also had the impact of concentrating the majority of Europe's Roma in Eastern Europe. The new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe presently contain the majority of the Roma population of the world. The Roma have a history of initial welcome, gradual intolerance, followed by oppression that plagues the integration of Roma into present society.

### **C. ROMA IN THE 18<sup>TH</sup> AND 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES**

#### **1. Enslavement in Romania**

Slavery in Romania has left an impression on the Roma, and societal attitudes of the Roma that continue until the present. Establishment of slavery in Romania was gradual, beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Due to a labor shortage, especially that of skilled labor, the Roma were increasingly prevented from migration. Laws were passed to restrict movement, prevent runaways, and stop illegal Gypsy

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<sup>40</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Struggling for Ethnic Identity: Czechoslovakia's Endangered Gypsies*, (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1992), 5.

slave trading.<sup>41</sup> Slavery was fully established and condoned by the local rulers and the church by the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>42</sup> Roma did not even have the status of serfs, who were tied to the land and sold with the land. A Gypsy slave had no rights or privilege, and could be brought or sold at will with no respect to family or group ties.<sup>43</sup>

Emancipation of the Gypsies did not occur until late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Initial overtures at freedom were made in 1837. This probably occurred as a result of the international community and the status of a slave state indicating to the rest of Europe the complete backwardness of Wallachia and Moldavia. Thus many privately owned slaves were liberated and attempts were made to abolish the institution of Roma slavery.<sup>44</sup> Church slaves were also freed in limited amounts during this period.<sup>45</sup> Full freedom was not enacted until 1864, when Prince Ioan Alexandru Couza gave the Gypsies their emancipation.<sup>46</sup> Additional

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<sup>41</sup> Crowe, David, *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, 63.

<sup>42</sup> Tanner, Harold, "The Roma Persecution," *The Patrin Web Journal*, accessed on 11 August 1998, available from <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/porraimos.htm>; Internet, 2.

<sup>43</sup> Fraser, Angus, "Rom Migrations," *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, series 5, volume 2, number 2, (August 1992), 133.

<sup>44</sup> Crowe, David, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, 114.

<sup>45</sup> Fraser, Angus, "Rom Migrations," 134.

<sup>46</sup> Hancock, Ian, *Pariah Syndrome*, 35.

rights followed with grants of land and attempts of reconciliation with both Gypsies and peasants.<sup>47</sup> Coupled with emancipation, the Roma with their new found freedom did exactly what was prevented for hundreds of years, start a mass migration out of the newly formed state of Romania into other areas of Eastern Europe.<sup>48</sup> The scars of slavery still remain however, with derogatory appellations and a low social position in Romania. Additionally, despite many Roma migrating to somewhat better conditions in Central and Eastern Europe, many were forced to remain due to economic factors that rendered them into almost the same situation as had previously occurred.

## **2. Assimilation under the Habsburgs**

One of the first efforts at social assimilation was begun in the Habsburg Empire in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Attempts at persecution were deemed too violent and destructive of society.<sup>49</sup> So persecution ceased and a program initiated to transform Gypsies into the peasantry and make them useful members of society. This policy was started by Empress Maria Theresa in 1758, and was guided by pragmatic and

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<sup>47</sup> Crowe, David and Kolsti, John, *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, 67.

<sup>48</sup> Liegeois, Jean-Pierre and Gheorghe, Nicolae, "Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority," 9.

<sup>49</sup> Fraser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, 157.

economic considerations rather than solely humanitarian.<sup>50</sup> All the peoples of Austria-Hungary were to be united and in this effort the Gypsies were termed "New Hungarians."<sup>51</sup> Assimilation included relocation, elimination of the Romany language, and conscription in the Armed Forces. Relocation included forced settlement and the decree of assimilation.<sup>52</sup> Assimilation included separation of children from parents and placement in Hungarian families in order to permanently eliminate the Roma identity from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>53</sup> The attempt instantly to assimilate the Roma was continued by Maria Theresa's son, Joseph II, who had visions of a unified single people in his empire. The only problem with Imperial Decrees is enforcement, and in this issue the local authorities were lax to act. Be it through convenience or other problems of a more pressing nature to the local authorities, the assimilation campaign was a failure, and ceased after his reign.<sup>54</sup> Similar assimilation campaigns have also failed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to lack of cooperation from local authorities and the populace that

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<sup>50</sup> Crowe, David and Kolsti, John, *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, 94.

<sup>51</sup> Hancock, Ian, *The Pariah Syndrome*, 51.

<sup>52</sup> Crowe, David, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, 38.

<sup>53</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Struggling for Ethnic Identity: Czechoslovakia's Endangered Gypsies*, 6.

<sup>54</sup> Faser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, 159.

is to be assimilated. However, due to this early Magyarization campaign, Roma rights and status in Hungary, where assimilation was somewhat enforced, is among the best of Eastern Europe. Whereas in Bohemia, also a former part of the Empire, where enforcement was lax, the situation of the Roma is still in a deplorable state.

#### **D. ROMA IN THE INTER-WAR PERIOD**

##### **1. Resurgence of National Consciousness**

The end of World War I and the establishment of new states with new constitutions gave the Roma the chance to become recognized as a national minority with the same civil and legal protections that protected any citizen. With this freedom also came a resurgence of interest in Roma nationalism. Nationalism in the sense of discovering kinship groups and establishing within the state Roma groups dedicated to education and political rights. That the state groups might constitute an inter-state Roma identity and political movement was desired, and in a few cases briefly realized.

Gypsies in Czechoslovakia made considerable progress under the new constitution of 29 February 1920.<sup>55</sup> The new constitution gave the Roma status as a nationality, on par

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<sup>55</sup> Crowe, David, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, 42.

with Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, and Hungarians.<sup>56</sup> Efforts were made towards establishing special schools for Roma.<sup>57</sup> Gypsy societies were formed, including those to study the Gypsy problem, but also to promote cultural activities and sports.<sup>58</sup> In Romania, Roma made similar strides, although not recognized as a distinct nationality. However the start of an international Roma group began in 1926 in Romania and even sponsored a Gypsy conference in Bucharest.<sup>59</sup> However the brief flowering of national consciousness came at a time when increasing economic and social pressures of the late 1920s and early 1930s developed into national movements within the new states created after World War I.<sup>60</sup>

## **2. Return to Intolerance**

The early signs of a return to intolerance and preventing the Roma from achieving an increased social position came as early as 1921 in Czechoslovakia. Although granted nationality status, the government and the populace were unwilling to accept the new status of the Roma.

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<sup>56</sup> Fox, Jonathan, "Roma (Gypsies) in the Czech Republic," accessed on 30 July 1998, available from <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar/czeroma.htm>; Internet, 1.

<sup>57</sup> Rehfisch, Farnham, *Gypsies, Tinkers and other Travellers*, 212.

<sup>58</sup> Crowe, David, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, 46.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 129.

<sup>60</sup> Crowe, David and Kolsti, John, *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, 153.

Repressive legislation was still present, particularly aimed at the Roma lifestyle. A lifestyle that was settled on the outskirts of towns, but also seasonally migratory and aimed at traditional Roma trades and crafts. In 1927 a special law was passed to have Gypsies carry a special identity card.<sup>61</sup> In Romania and Hungary, national efforts to discover and transform the national identity of state were becoming prevalent and were expressed in such movements as Magyarization and Romanization.<sup>62</sup> Such movements sought assimilation, not integration, of the Roma, if the Roma were to be included at all. The most extreme example of nationalism came in Romania under the rule of King Carol II (r.1930-1940) where Romanian nationalism excluded all minority groups. The rise of Nazi Germany influenced Czechoslovakia and increasingly anti-Roma legislation was enacted. In Slovakia in 1940, Gypsies encountered the same situation as those in Germany, a defined and registered sub-class destined for exclusion and extermination.<sup>63</sup> The Roma and the Jews both suffered extensively during the years of World War II, each having

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<sup>61</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Struggling for Ethnic Identity: Czechoslovakia's Endangered Gypsies*, 6.

<sup>62</sup> Crowe, David and Kolsti, John, *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, 153.

<sup>63</sup> Novitch, Myriam, "Gypsy Victims of the Nazi Terror," *The Patrin Web Journal*, accessed on 11 August 1998, available from <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/terror.htm>; Internet, 1.



its holocaust. However, whereas the Jews gained national recognition and a homeland after the War, the Roma situation continued as before. An emergence of a repetitive pattern of welcoming and tolerance, turning to intolerance, followed by oppression is evident during the inter-war years.

### III. ROMA AND COMMUNISM, 1948 TO 1989

#### A. ROMA IN ROMANIA

##### 1. Early Nationality Policy

The minorities of Central and Eastern Europe were attracted to the promises of communism and were indeed encouraged to become part of the Party in Romania. This phenomenon echoed Stalin's policy of using national minorities in Romania to undermine anticommunist sentiment.<sup>64</sup> This policy, was of course, in the early years of communist fervor, 1944-1947. The Roma never did achieve sufficient political power for recognition as a national minority. Their efforts were hampered by Romania's traditional ambivalence towards the subject of Roma nationalism.<sup>65</sup> Roma who persisted in continuing a nomadic existence also troubled communist authorities.<sup>66</sup> The prevailing attitude was that Roma must adopt a more settled Romanian lifestyle before they could be considered a national minority.<sup>67</sup> The Romanian leadership argued that the Roma did not even fit the criteria for national status, as defined by Stalin, which included a common language,

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<sup>64</sup> Crowe, David and Kolsti, John, *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, 71.

<sup>65</sup> Fox, Jonathan, "Roma (Gypsies) in Romania," 1.

<sup>66</sup> Crowe, David, *A History of the Gypsies in Eastern Europe*, 136.

<sup>67</sup> Crowe, David and Kolsti, John, *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, 71.

territory, economy, and culture. Therefore the Roma could achieve no greater recognition other than as a social problem.<sup>68</sup> Thus the Roma were left without recognition and without the rights of such other national minorities as the Magyars, Germans, and Jews.

## **2. Attempts at Assimilation**

Assimilation is defined as the process by which the minority will conform to the majority, and that the majority will not alter when absorbing the minority.<sup>69</sup> As the Roma were not accepted as a nationality, attempts were thus made to fit them into the new Romanian society. Forced settlement and restrictions on nomadism were enacted. Employment was expected, as was schooling. However due to their non-nationality status, no special programs were enacted.<sup>70</sup> Additionally the Roma still faced old hostilities from the majority of the citizenry who resisted efforts of forced settlement in their areas and were hesitant to employ Roma. Thus the attempts at assimilation failed from lack of support on either side. However the Roma did benefit under communism and their living standard did improve, due to access to state medical

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<sup>68</sup> Minority Rights Group, "Rom: Europe's Gypsies," report number 14, (March 1973), 13.

<sup>69</sup> Cashmore, Ellis, *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations*, 38.

<sup>70</sup> Faser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, 280.

care, some employment, housing, social services, and limited primary education. Additionally the Roma benefited from a repressive regime whose security forces were able to contain spontaneous, random violence against the Roma.<sup>71</sup>

## **B. ROMA IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA**

### **1. Nationality Policy and Migration**

The nationality policy of Czechoslovakia varied in each succeeding decade after the communist takeover in February 1948. Initially one assumed that the Roma were victims of capitalism and therefore, under a communist regime, would automatically assimilate into society with no further effort made by the government. Ignoring the "Gypsy problem" was the answer to the problem.<sup>72</sup> The Roma were not granted nationality status, it was repealed after the takeover. Roma were thus categorized as a backward ethnic group that could be helped by social services. It was thought that gradual integration could be accomplished. Later when initial attempts at integration failed a more intense form of assimilation would be considered.<sup>73</sup> Ignoring the Roma did not work, although great statements

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<sup>71</sup> Fox, Jonathan, "Roma (Gypsies) in Romania," 2.

<sup>72</sup> Fraser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, 277.

<sup>73</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Struggling for Ethnic Identity: Czechoslovakia's Endangered Gypsies*, 9.

were made of a few success stories in education or employment. A harsher attempt at forced integration was started in 1958, encouraging settlement and restricting nomadism. A brief respite occurred in 1968, during the Prague Spring, once Roma associations formed and greater political representation transpired in turn. The Roma were still not considered for status as a nationality by the Czechoslovakian government, but during this time were considered a virtual nationality with many of the same rights as other minorities.<sup>74</sup> This virtual nationality underwent revision in 1973 and the Roma remained without ethnic recognition in Czechoslovakia until 1989.

A significant aspect in the government's haphazard reactions to the Roma was the large migration of Roma from Slovakia into Bohemia and Moravia. This was caused by two factors. The first, a move from poorer Slovakia into the relatively wealthier Czech lands, and the second, the normal urban migration experienced by almost all Central European states during this time.<sup>75</sup> Due to this migration the government authorities had a significant amount of trouble keeping records of the Roma and enforcing regulations. Local authorities often ignored the required

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<sup>74</sup> Fraser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, 278.

<sup>75</sup> Minority Rights Group, "Rom: Europe's Gypsies," 17.

laws as the Roma were a cheap source of labor.<sup>76</sup> The Roma resisted all attempts at integration which also adversely affected efforts at recognition as a national minority and not as a social problem.

## **2. Attempts at Assimilation**

After 1948 and the failure of the Roma instantly to assimilate into communist society, the government enacted legislation designed to eliminate the primitive old Gypsy life through dispersion and assimilation.<sup>77</sup> Initial attempts at assimilation were associated with benevolent programs and a degree of paternalism, but met with little success. In 1958 a crash program of assimilation was attempted with the passage of Law 74/958. This law was designed around preventing nomadism but also restricted other traditional Roma trades. It also required registration of all Roma whether nomadic or sedentary.<sup>78</sup> The law backed the general theory that the Roma identity had to be erased if they were to be assimilated into society.<sup>79</sup> This campaign failed not only because of resistance by the Roma but also resistance from local

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<sup>76</sup> Fraser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, 279.

<sup>77</sup> Fox, Jonathan, "Roma (Gypsies) in the Czech Republic," 1.

<sup>78</sup> Minority Rights Group, "Rom: Europe's Gypsies," 17.

<sup>79</sup> Fraser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, 278.

authorities and the problems of migration discussed earlier. A new campaign followed from the new government created Council for Questions of the Gypsy Population in 1965.<sup>80</sup> The revised assimilation plan called for full employment of all Roma and the dispersal of the population. This plan also failed, although a significant number of Roma were relocated from rural Slovakia to rural Bohemia and Moravia, due to rural to urban migration tendency. Following an easing of assimilation campaigns begun with the Prague Spring of 1968, in 1973 the government clamped down on the Roma claiming that they had failed to achieve their assimilatory function.<sup>81</sup> The Roma lost any rights they enjoyed which included some Roma schools and were treated as social pariahs. One aspect of their social status is evidenced by the policy of sterilizing Roma women after a few births in an attempt to control the population.<sup>82</sup> However despite the rigid policies of the communist government, the Roma still were not assimilated or even integrated into society by 1989 and would present

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<sup>80</sup> Crowe, David and Kolsti, John, *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, 99.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 103.

<sup>82</sup> Fraser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, 279.

the new government with similar social and demographic problems.



#### IV. ROMA AND THE NEW DEMOCRACIES, 1989 TO 1998

##### A. ROMA IN ROMANIA

##### 1. Governmental Policy

The overthrow of the Ceaurescu in 1989 led to a frenzy of Roma activity that had been repressed during the communist years. Many independent political parties based upon Roma support emerged.<sup>83</sup> However little has changed for the status of the Roma despite the increased freedom. Democracy did not change the centuries old bias against the Roma and few formal governmental efforts were made to integrate or accept the Roma in society. The new Roma organizations and political parties created a backlash of anti-Roma feeling, a sentiment itself freed from repression that carries on to the present day.<sup>84</sup> The Romanian government did create a Council for Ethnic Minorities in April 1943 to represent the state's 14 different ethnic groups, but little has been done to further their conditions.<sup>85</sup> Official government policy, especially when pressured by other states, is that all citizens of Romania are treated equally. However, anti-Roma sentiment is not discouraged and has only been driven down to the local

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<sup>83</sup> Crowe, David, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, 144.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 145.

<sup>85</sup> Fox, Jonathan, "Roma (Gypsies) in Romania," 6.

level. Police raids and community violence, with little intervention by national authority has become the norm.<sup>86</sup> This was at the time that Romania experienced a peaceful, democratic change of government, 1996, that should indicate a growing awareness of Human Rights and democratic tradition, but there have been no major changes in the state's policy on treatment of ethnic minorities.<sup>87</sup> However in 1998, Romania's Minister of Education pledged that Roma would be given more places in schools and higher education.<sup>88</sup> This statement can give hope to the emergence of governmental intervention in a serious problem but official policy in the new democracy of Romania has still to match international standards for the treatment of minorities.

## **2. Present Conditions**

Actual conditions for the Roma have degraded since the revolution of 1989. Deplorable under the communist regime, at least the repressive government was able to contain the anti-Roma sentiment in the populace. Romania is home to

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<sup>86</sup> European Roma Rights Center, "Sudden Rage at Dawn: Violence Against Roma in Romania," *Country Series Reports Series*, number 2, September 1996, 5.

<sup>87</sup> International Helsinki Federation For Human Rights, "Annual Report 1997," 1.

<sup>88</sup> "Roma in Romania," *RomNews Network*, April the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1998, accessed on 10 August 1998, available from <http://www.romnews.com/a/32-98.html>; Internet.

the largest Roma population in Eastern Europe.<sup>89</sup> Estimates are extremely varied, but ten percent of the population is probably accurate. The emergence of local violence and inter-ethnic clashes is increasing with 37 such incidents reported from 1991 to 1995.<sup>90</sup> Also, sanctioned violence has increased in the form of police raids, use of excessive force, and lack of official protection for Roma have all been more evident since 1991.<sup>91</sup> Such conditions have come to the attention of such European security organizations, as the European Union, that have suggested measures for improvement. European observers, however, remain doubtful of positive developments.<sup>92</sup> The situation for ethnic minorities, with the exception of Hungarians, is precarious in Romania and unless governmental action is taken it is likely that it could affect Romanian membership in the European community despite avowals of democracy and equal treatment. The European Union denied early entry for Romania and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization also remains cautious in relations.

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<sup>89</sup> Dascalu, Roxana, "EU Urges Romania to Improve Treatment of Gypsies," *Reuters*, August 5, 1997, Global News Bank, accessed on 04 August 1998, available from <http://207.87.6.189/bin/gate.exe?f=doc&state=482fj2.2.24>; Internet.

<sup>90</sup> Fox, Jonathan, "Roma (Gypsies) in Romania," 7.

<sup>91</sup> International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, "Annual Report 1997," 10.

<sup>92</sup> "EU Urges Romania to Improve Treatment of Roma," *RomNews Network*, 5 August 1997, accessed on 10 August 1998, available from <http://www.romnews.com/a/40-97.html>; Internet.

## B. ROMA IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

### 1. Governmental Policy

Since the "Velvet Revolution" of 1989, the Roma have made significant political and social strides in the Czech Republic. Roma have been recognized as a national minority and guaranteed rights under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic pre 1993.<sup>93</sup> These rights include cultural and linguistic development and the formation of ethnic political parties. There are statements prohibiting racial discrimination in all areas of public life, including employment and education, but as of 1998 these were yet to be ratified.<sup>94</sup> Pressure from non-governmental organizations and membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization will probably give the impetus to ratify these rights, under Article II of the Washington Treaty. The Czech citizenship policy began after the Czech and Slovak Republics separated into two states on 01 January 1993 amid the Czech government's concern over migration from Slovakia the previous year.<sup>95</sup> The new citizenship law includes

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<sup>93</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Struggling for Ethnic Identity: Czechoslovakia's Endangered Gypsies*, 1.

<sup>94</sup> European Roma Rights Center, "Written Comments of the ERRC Concerning the Czech Republic," 23 February, 1998, accessed on 04 August 1998, available from <http://www.errc.com/legaladv/cerdm.htm>; Internet, 2.

<sup>95</sup> Fox, Jonathan, "Roma (Gypsies) in the Czech Republic," 5.

provisions for a) residency in the state for two years, b) cannot have committed a crime for the past five years, and c) a language proficiency test. The policy has denied citizenship to approximately 100,000 Roma, one-third of their population and many lifelong citizens, but unregistered due to previous conditions.<sup>96</sup> Thus although Roma are granted minority status, they must be citizens to receive those rights. The citizenship policy also affects employment and social benefits. The Czech Parliament, recognizing an increase in xenophobia, passed a resolution denouncing racism in October 1996, and created a special police force to investigate incidents of racism.<sup>97</sup> Another positive sign by the government is the creation of a zero year in public schools, a chance for children to improve Czech language skills, and the hiring of teaching assistants who speak both Czech and Rom, greatly improving the chance of Roma to finish school.<sup>98</sup> Thus the Czech government in official policy has granted Roma the same rights as other minorities. The only flaw being that the

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<sup>96</sup> Neier, Aryeh, "Watching Rights," *The Nation*, New York, May 1, 1995, Proquest, available from <http://proquest.umi.com/pdqweb?Did=000000001832540&Fmt=3&Deli=1&Mtd=18/4/98=7&Sid.htm>; Internet, 2.

<sup>97</sup> International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, "Annual Report 1997," 10.

<sup>98</sup> Rocks, David, "Gypsy Minority a Target for Hate," *Inter Press Service*, April 24, 1996, Global News Bank, accessed on 04 August 1998, available from <http://207.87.6.189/bin/gate.exe?f=doc&state=482fj2.2.13>; Internet, 4.

new citizenship law prevents many from enjoying those rights.

## **2. Present Conditions**

The freedoms of new Czech democracy gave the Roma a new chance to develop their culture and have a voice in politics. The very same liberty has given the rest of the populace the chance to express opinions in a new, virulent manner, mostly directed against the Roma.<sup>99</sup> Although the government prohibits discrimination, it is widely present in housing, employment, education, and public services.<sup>100</sup> Many Roma have expressed the opinion that they were better off during communist times as employment was guaranteed. They are now the first to be laid off and have little chance of finding work due to the racial bias of employers.<sup>101</sup> The unemployment rate in 1996 in the Czech Republic was at 2.9 percent, the lowest in Europe. The unemployment rate for Rom males is estimated at between 30 to 50 percent.<sup>102</sup> In the area of education, there is an 85 percent dropout rate from public school, although the

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<sup>99</sup> Crowe, David, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, 63.

<sup>100</sup> Rocks, David, "Gypsy Minority a Target for Hate," 2.

<sup>101</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Struggling for Ethnic Identity: Czechoslovakia's Endangered Gypsies*, 77.

<sup>102</sup> Rocks, David, "Gypsy Minority a Target for Hate," 3.

government is addressing the issue.<sup>103</sup> Discrimination is rampant with 35 percent of Czechs favoring concentrating and isolating the Roma and 45 percent expressed the desire to move the Roma out of the Czech Republic according to a 1996 poll.<sup>104</sup> Isolation tendencies have already been expressed by local authorities, an instance of which is the construction of wall to separate the Roma from the rest of the town of Usti nad Labem, Czech Republic.<sup>105</sup> There is also a rise in the incidence of racial attacks and skinhead groups focused on Roma. From 1990 to 1997 there have been 28 Czech Roma killed and over 400 seriously injured in racial violence.<sup>106</sup> The racial opinions are not just confined to a small radical group in the Czech Republic; rather they tend to reflect the view of the majority of the citizens.

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<sup>103</sup> "The Romani Education Programme of the New School Foundation," *The Patrín Web Journal*, accessed on 30 July 1998, available from <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/roma-education.htm>; Internet 2.

<sup>104</sup> "Roma Exodus from Czech Republic," *The Patrín Web Journal*, accessed on 30 July 1998, available from <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/czech1.htm>; Internet 2.

<sup>105</sup> Montgomery, Lori, "Anti-Gypsy Sentiment Strong in Czech Republic," *Knight-Ridder Washington Bureau*, June 24, 1998, Global News Bank, accessed on 04 August 1998, available from <http://207.87.6.189/bin/gate.exe?f=doc&state=482fj2.2.4>; Internet, 1.

<sup>106</sup> Gross, Tom, "Persecuted Under Vaclav Havel," *The Spectator*, London, Nov 8, 1997, Proquest, available from <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?Did=000000023006894&Fmt=3&Deli=1&Mtd=18/4/98=46&Sid.htm>; Internet, 2.

## C. ROMA IN SLOVAKIA

### 1. Governmental Policy

Officially the Slovak government follows the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms passed by the Czech and Slovak Federal Republics on 09 January 1991.<sup>107</sup> This Charter guarantees the development of minorities in their own language and prohibits discrimination. The Roma are considered a nationality in Slovakia as stated in the "Principles of the governmental policy of the Slovak republic toward the Romanies" which was adopted on 09 April 1991.<sup>108</sup> This policy gives the Roma similar rights and protection as other Slovak nationalities. Also in Slovakia there has not been a change in citizenship requirements as had occurred in the Czech Republic. The Slovak government made an abrupt shift in its minority freedoms with the passage of the Law on the State Language in April 1995. This law took away the minority right to conduct business and official correspondence. It also nullified the former law that permitted the use of a minority language in schools if the population exceeded 20 percent in a particular location.<sup>109</sup> Although there is no official

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<sup>107</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Struggling for Ethnic Identity: Czechoslovakia's Endangered Gypsies*, 15.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

<sup>109</sup> International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, "Annual Report 1997," 7.



racism a statement made by then ex-Slovak Premier Vladimir Meciar in September 1993 expressed the view that it was necessary to "...curtail the reproduction of certain backwards people."<sup>110</sup> This statement was certainly aimed at the Roma. Meciar was voted from office in March 1993 partially due to his intolerant views, only to later regain the post of Premier. However, the unofficial sanctioning of racism is prevalent in Slovakia. Efforts by the government are being made in the area of schooling, with more Roma teachers in training.<sup>111</sup> The racism in Slovakia and discrimination against minorities, including the very large and vocal Magyar minority, have come to the attention of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which has sent representatives to assess the situation and to advise on the repeal of the Language Law.<sup>112</sup>

## **2. Present Conditions**

The marginalization of the Roma has continued in the Slovak Republic. Unofficial racism and discriminatory practices continue, especially in housing. The creation of

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<sup>110</sup> Crowe, David, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, 66.

<sup>111</sup> International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, "Annual Report 1997," 16.

<sup>112</sup> European Roma Rights Center, "Time of the Skinheads: Denial and Exclusion of Roma in Slovakia, *Country Reports Series*, No. 3, January 1997, 26.

Roma ghettos is common, most often by restrictive location specific work permits.<sup>113</sup> Police inaction in Roma related incidents have led to increased violence against the Roma. In 1996 there were 19 racially motivated attacks against Roma by skinheads. Often the skinheads remained at large and unpunished.<sup>114</sup> Racial violence has increased each year since 1991. During 1997, there were three Roma killed by skinheads.<sup>115</sup> In a poll in 1994, 85 percent of Slovaks expressed that there was no discrimination against Roma in Slovakia. In this statement there are two divergent viewpoints. The first is that the Roma are a criminal, degenerate minority. The other is that the Roma are too well treated by the state and other Slovaks in housing and social benefits.<sup>116</sup> The treatment of the Roma by the Slovaks has come to the attention of many European security organizations and could affect its membership in these organizations and future memberships in other organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>114</sup> International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, "Annual Report 1997," 8.

<sup>115</sup> European Roma Rights Center, "ERRC Statement to the OSCE Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues," *The Patrín Web Journal*, accessed on 30 July 1998, available from <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/errc-osce.htm>; Internet, 4.

<sup>116</sup> European Roma Rights Center, "Time of the Skinheads: Denial and Exclusion of Roma in Slovakia," 23.

## **V. SOURCES OF CONFLICT AND SECURITY ISSUES**

### **A. RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION**

Racism and discrimination can cause internal conflict in a state and that might also cause security issues with neighboring states. Racism against another country's minority in a state is likely to cause security problems. Rampant discrimination can make a state a pariah among other states and prevent membership in security organizations. In Central and Eastern Europe, racism has again risen to the surface. This is perhaps due to the massive social and economic dislocations experienced between the expectations of political reform and the harsh realities of economic decline and everyday deprivation.<sup>117</sup> In this context nationalist and racist movements are able to attract adherents by blaming a state's problems on disadvantaged minorities, such as the Gypsies.

#### **1. Education**

The question of education for the Roma has always been difficult. Education is desirable, as it will improve the social standard of the minority, however the education system must adapt to the minority in order to educate it. The history of Roma education is poor. Most do not go to

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<sup>117</sup> Cashmore, Ellis, *The Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations*, 108.

school and a high illiteracy rate remains. With illiterate parents who do not support schooling and the schools themselves intimidating and usually taught in a foreign language, the barrier to education is formidable.<sup>118</sup> Many Roma children are placed in special schools. These schools are not designed for Roma but rather for the mentally handicapped.<sup>119</sup> Special programs are being addressed to counter the high dropout rate among Roma. Roma-only schools are being developed because in conventional schools Roma are shunned by the other students and teachers.<sup>120</sup> This trend should be encouraged, as education is the key to improvement and to breaking the stereotype, and reality, of the illiterate, unemployed Roma. Education for minorities is also a basic tenet of every European security organization. For full acceptance into the European Community, the new democracies must comply with basic standards of treatment for minorities.

## **2. Housing**

The issue of housing is troublesome. Without housing, Roma have little access to schools or a regular means of

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<sup>118</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Struggling for Ethnic Identity: Czechoslovakia's Endangered Gypsies*, 47.

<sup>119</sup> European Roma Rights Center, "Statement of the ERRC on the Occasion of the Acceptance into NATO of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland," 69.

<sup>120</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Struggling for Ethnic Identity: Czechoslovakia's Endangered Gypsies*, 48.

employment. However, the Roma have a reputation of destroying public housing under communist rule and in the new democracies. Housing policy has also been haphazard. Governments have destroyed sub-standard housing and hovels due to health reasons, but have not offered alternatives. This in turn led to the creation of new shantytowns. An effort was made in Czechoslovakia to house Roma, often giving them preferential treatment over Czechs who had to wait up to ten years for an apartment. The Roma in this housing assimilation plan destroyed the apartments.<sup>121</sup> This legacy has haunted plans for new Roma housing projects in the Czech Republic. The reason for failure is likely the crash attempt at housing Roma, like other communist crash programs of building dams or harvesting. The attempt neither recognized the problems of dealing with the Roma nor provided sufficient guidance or education in moving the Roma. Ghettos are being created in the Czech Republic by forcing Roma into sub-standard apartments, apart from the Czech population. This is done with all the fervor of the communist program with equal results.<sup>122</sup> Housing is also an issue of most security organizations, but the real factor

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>122</sup> Montgomery, Lori, "Anti-Gypsy Sentiment Strong in Czech Republic," 4.

is the lack of housing perpetuates the condition of the Roma, providing a de-stabilizing influence.

### **3. Employment**

The Roma have been the hardest hit by the economic transition from communism to democracy. Primarily unskilled labor, they are the first to be laid off and the last to be hired. Employers now have the freedom to hire and fire and do discriminate against Roma although the official government policy prohibits the practice.<sup>123</sup> Unemployment for Roma is estimated at 30 percent, and is higher in urban areas. Unskilled labor from other Eastern European countries is usually hired before the Roma, further exacerbating the unemployment problem.<sup>124</sup> With unemployment come poverty and the rest of the social problems. Roma are responsible for many crimes and theft in Central and Eastern Europe due to fact of high unemployment. This is also a security problem, not just internally, because unemployment leads to migration, causing interstate problems.

### **4. Criminal Justice System**

The new democracies have all ratified international treaties on Civil and Political Rights. These treaties

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<sup>123</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Struggling for Ethnic Identity: Czechoslovakia's Endangered Gypsies*, 77.

<sup>124</sup> Rocks, David, "Gypsy Minority a Target for Hate," 3.

specify the rights of citizens and minorities in regard to the police judicial system, affirming equal treatment.<sup>125</sup> The standards of a democracy are international and membership in European Security Organizations is dependent on observation of these standards. However Roma are subject to extended pre-trial detention and disproportionate sentences indicating a racial bias in the justice system.<sup>126</sup> A tendency toward slow or non-investigation of crimes against Roma has improved primarily due to the efforts of non-governmental organizations and Human Rights monitoring. The transition from communism to democracy has been slow in police forces that have had to change from protecting the ruling class from the people, to protecting the people. Widespread racism exists at lower levels of the police and is also a factor in the treatment of Roma. Protecting basic democratic freedoms is a necessity in acceptance of the new democracies by the West.

##### **5. Public and Private Services**

Racism has surfaced in the public sector by denying access to public transportation to Roma. In the new democracies, the only method Roma have of going to work or

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<sup>125</sup> European Roma Rights Center, "Sudden Rage at Dawn: Violence Against Roma in Romania," 21.

<sup>126</sup> European Roma Rights Center, "Written Comments of the ERRRC Concerning the Czech Republic," 5.

school is through public transportation. Denial of transport affects education and employment.<sup>127</sup> However more common is discrimination from private services; mostly restaurants, pubs, and theaters. Since the advent of democracy, private enterprises have begun restricting access despite government policy. International treaties that outlaw discrimination in any place or service intended for use by the general public have been ratified by the new democracies, as do their own internal constitutions.<sup>128</sup> Discrimination in the service sector, if allowed to continue, will allow for an openly racist society and the emergence of second or third class citizens. Discrimination in public and private sectors can lead to migration and security problems.

#### **B. CROSS-BORDER MIGRATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC ISSUES**

Cross-border migration is a significant issue in the security of a region. Unwanted and uncontrolled migration can occur due to an increase of discrimination in one state resulting in migration to a perceived more tolerant state. Economic factors also play a large role, especially in the economies of the new democracies. Where unskilled labor is unemployed they move to a state that is in need of

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<sup>127</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Struggling for Ethnic Identity: Czechoslovakia's Endangered Gypsies*, 115.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 111.



services. These migrations can cause significant strains on the social systems of a state. Racism can also develop due to the entry of a significant amount of foreign workers, who are perceived as taking the jobs away from the native populace and abusing the social services of the state. Migration, and its subsequent social problems, is occurring in Eastern Europe today. Demographic factors can also affect security. In Eastern Europe the majority populations have low birth rates as is common in the West. The minorities, primarily the uneducated and unskilled minorities, have high birthrates. In the internal security of state, the high birthrate of a minority can affect the political power of the minority as well as the majority. The growing minority is also seen as draining the social service system.

#### **1. Romania**

In Romania the majority population, Romanian, has a decreasing birthrate, thus increasing the percentage of population represented by minorities. For the Roma in Romania, the birthrate is increasing dramatically. The average Roma family has 4.75 children, over twice the average Romanian family.<sup>129</sup> Another factor is that two-

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<sup>129</sup> Fox, Jonathan, "Roma (Gypsies) in Romania," 2.

thirds of Roma are married by age seventeen and are on a generational birthrate curve far above the Romanians. Added to the demographic stress is the factor that a large number of Roma are unemployed and collect social benefits for the large families. These factors combine to cause racism and discrimination against the Roma.

Cross-border migration has also impacted Romania. Many Roma left after 1989, either to escape their former status or for employment. In May 1990 more than 4,000 Roma migrated to East Berlin in hopes of enjoying new freedoms and in hope of taking advantage of pending German reunification.<sup>130</sup> Economic and social migration has caused security problems between Germany and Romania as Germany wants to repatriate the Roma and Romania is unwilling to comply. Due to economic ailments in Romania, in November 1990, 250,000 Roma are migrants in Poland, working under ninety day migrant visas.<sup>131</sup> Economic migration has caused tension between Poland and Romania. In Poland the cheap labor force of Roma is seen as taking away Polish employment. In Romania the returning Roma are relatively better off than the local populace that questions the continued use of social services for migratory Roma.

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 4.

## 2. Czech Republic

The demographic situation in the Czech Republic is similar to that of Romania. The Czech population is declining, reported to be below the level of biological reproduction. The average live births for a Czech woman was 2.4 and for a Roma woman 6.4 in 1990.<sup>132</sup> Further statistics indicate that the Rom population grew by 47 percent from 1980 to 1990, while the general population grew by six percent.<sup>133</sup> Estimates are that the Rom birthrate is at least twice that of non-Rom.<sup>134</sup> The large growth of an unwanted Roma minority has exacerbated internal security with the rise of nationalist groups and racism which manifests itself in a call for a solution to the "Gypsy problem."

Cross-border migration has also been a problem in the Czech Republic. In January 1993, the Czech government complained that an estimated 30,000 Roma migrated to the state from Slovakia before split between the two states. An estimated 20,000 Roma regularly migrate between Slovakia

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<sup>132</sup> Crowe, David, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, 61.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 60.

<sup>134</sup> Bennett, Linda A., *Encyclopedia of World Cultures, Volume IV, Europe (Central, Western, and Southeastern Europe)*, (New York: G.K. Hall & Company, 1991), 218.

and the Czech Republic, mainly for economic reasons.<sup>135</sup> This migration resulted in the Czech citizenship law discussed earlier and caused tension between the two states. Rom emigration to the United Kingdom has also caused tension, not only because the United Kingdom does not want the Roma, but also because the Roma are seeking political asylum.<sup>136</sup> Asylum seekers arrived at the inopportune time when the Czech Republic was seeking membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, October 1997. Most of the 600 Roma who sought to emigrate were refused entry, but the attention they drew brought focus to human rights abuses in the Czech Republic.<sup>137</sup> Thus, though only a small number of a minority sought to emigrate, they caused a major problem in the Czech Republic's security policy.

### 3. Slovakia

The Roma are the fastest growing minority in Eastern Europe and are the youngest. The majority of Roma are

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<sup>135</sup> Fox, Jonathan, *Roma (Gypsies) in the Czech Republic*, 5.

<sup>136</sup> Gross, Tom, "Persecuted under Vaclav Havel," 1.

<sup>137</sup> Hill, Don and Slaba, Dora, "Western Press Review: Great Romany Migration," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, accessed on 10 August 1998, available from <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/1997/10/F.RU.971022123507.html>; Internet, 1.

under fifteen years of age.<sup>138</sup> No where is this more evident than in Slovakia. Romania may have the largest population of Roma, but Slovakia has the highest per capita population. In 1996 it was estimated that one out of ten Slovak citizens is a Roma.<sup>139</sup> Roma demographic trends have given rise to racism and nationalistic attitudes evident in other Central and Eastern European states. Roma are seen as a burden on society, producing an increasing population of poorly adaptable children.<sup>140</sup> An increase of racism will cause internal security problems and become a barrier for entry in European security organizations.

Migration has become a factor in the security policy of Slovakia. Not only with the Czech Republic and the large migration resulting in new citizenship laws, but also with the United Kingdom. A large number of Slovak Roma sought asylum in the United Kingdom, more than from the Czech Republic, and the United Kingdom sought to stop the unwanted migration. When efforts at negotiations failed, the United Kingdom imposed visa requirements on all Slovak

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<sup>138</sup> Hill, Don, "Europe: Cities and Towns Vow to Aid Romanies," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, accessed on 10 August 1998, available from <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/1997/10/F.RU.971024162420.html>; Internet, 1.

<sup>139</sup> European Roma Rights Center, "Time of the Skinheads: Denial and Exclusion of Roma in Slovakia," 5.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

citizens traveling to the United Kingdom.<sup>141</sup> Naturally, the United Kingdom, as a member of European security organizations, could not just impose visa requirement on Roma, as that would be discriminatory and racist, thus the overall requirement for Slovak citizens. Slovakia responded in kind a week later, imposing a visa requirement for United Kingdom citizens visiting Slovakia.<sup>142</sup> Roma asylum and immigration from Slovakia is another example of how cross-border migration can have a major effect of the security policy of a state.

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<sup>141</sup> Remias, Ivan, "Slovaks Need Visa for UK," *The Slovak Spectator*, volume 4, number 22, (October 12-18, 1998), accessed on 20 October 1998, available from <http://www.slovakspectator.sk/slovakspectator/archive/article.asp?id=603>; Internet, 1.

<sup>142</sup> "Slovakia Introduces Visa Requirement for UK Citizens," *The Prague Post*, Wednesday, October 21, 1998, accessed on 22 October 1998, available from <http://www.praguepost.cz/slov102198a.html>; Internet, 1.

## VI. AREAS FOR RESOLUTION

### A. LEGISLATION

Legislation by itself cannot prevent discrimination against the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. Official policies that accord with current Western European democracies are often not supported at the local level in Central and Eastern European states. Official state policy is evident in laws against discrimination in public and private sectors as well as the judicial system. However basic legislation that respects the rights of minorities and encourages them to be productive citizens of the state must be enacted and provided with the necessary funds and support to achieve the goal of human rights.

A fundamental right of minorities is language, language for official correspondence as well as in education. For membership in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), a state abides by the charter which guarantees language rights to minority groups. Included in these rights is education in a minority's language if the population of a particular location exceeds twenty percent.<sup>143</sup> Enforcement of current legislation is crucial where it matters most. The states treated herein all have

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<sup>143</sup> European Roma Rights Center, "Time of the Skinheads: Denial and Exclusion of Roma in Slovakia," 26.

legislation that prevents discrimination and racism, however bias in all areas still exists. Thus a comprehensive, national and international, training or monitoring program should be instituted to ensure that current legislation is enforced. Even if the spirit of the law is not followed, the firm legal guarantees must be enforced. Otherwise, unofficial and official discrimination and racism is sanctioned, and will occur on an increasing level.

#### **B. EDUCATION**

The area with greatest potential for improvement is the educational system in the new democracies. Education during the communist era was a positive influence on the population of the states. Enforced primary schooling resulted in an almost universal literacy, except among the Roma. Education, and particularly primary education, is a long-term investment by the state. The new democracies are facing many crises that detract from long-term planning and long-term expenditure. Economic turmoil and social dislocation provide little support for long-term solutions. However, education is the long-term solution to the integration of the Roma into society and the development of productive citizens. Trapped in a cycle of poverty, unemployment, and crime, the Roma cannot escape except



through education, especially for the new generation of Roma. Education of the new generation - those beginning primary school - has the possibility to change the character of the Roma in society.<sup>144</sup> With special language treatment, schools and teachers that understand and will not alienate the Roma, and programs for job training and avenues for further education, the problem of illiteracy and its subsequent social ills of unemployment, poverty, and crime can possibly be overcome.<sup>145</sup> The problem remains that education of the youth is long-term commitment and requires consistent funding and training. The required stable economic and social condition does not yet exist in the new democracies.

### C. MEDIA

The media can play a significant role in either antagonizing or reconciling society's perception of the Roma. Roma are regarded by the media and general society in the new democracies as a nomadic, clannish, and thieving group. The clannish aspect may be true, but the others do not apply to the majority of Roma. Most of the Roma have been settled on the territory of the new democracies for generations, yet they are still portrayed as nomadic, or at

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<sup>144</sup> "The Romani Education Programme of the New School Foundation," *The PatrIn Web Journal*, 3.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

the least in transition from nomadic to sedentary. The question posed by Roma is for how long do they have to settle in a state in order to be considered normal and to be a part of the state? The media perpetuates racist and exclusionist images.<sup>146</sup> Racist remarks are prevalent in all forms of media and such comments that should bring condemnation from larger ethnic groups, or stir some outrage in society as a whole are left to stand.<sup>147</sup> Rom ethnic identity is almost always included in reporting if there is a perceived societal problem or crime. The stereotypic portrayal of Roma, and its continued use by the media, is as a result of the lack of a large, educated Roma elite. A Roma elite that could write and influence the media, or of Roma lawyers who could file discrimination and racism suites against the more flagrant violations of state laws. Roma have just begun an interstate legal network with the European Roma Rights Center, but at the present it has not had enough time to influence widely held beliefs and attitudes.<sup>148</sup> Media portrayals of Roma are changing, mainly due to the outside influence of human rights

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<sup>146</sup> Rehfisch, Farnham, *Gypsies, Tinkers and other Travellers*, 148.

<sup>147</sup> Hancock, Ian, "Anti-Gypsyism," *The Patrín Web Journal*, 4.

<sup>148</sup> "EU Urges Romania to Improve Treatment of Roma," *RomNews Network*, 5 August 1997, accessed on 10 August 1998, available from <http://www.romnews.com/a/40-97.html>; Internet, 2.

organizations and European security institutions, however progress is slow. The European Union (EU) does not look kindly or welcome a state with an overtly racist society, or in biased media portrayals of minorities. The new democracies are trying to improve their media portrayal of the Roma as they attempt to gain membership in European security organizations.

#### **D. HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS**

Human rights organizations provide an external influence on a state, advising and mediating between the state and minorities, and between the state and security organizations or other states. Human rights organizations provide a valuable service by calling attention to present conditions of minorities and other areas of human rights abuses, to the state's government and other international organizations. Official government policy, adhering to current international standards, may very well differ from present conditions, as discussed in previous chapters. Since the state often cannot view a human rights situation in an unbiased manner, due either to historical racial bias, or current political and economic climate. The state has many concerns, internal and external, and reforming society along international standards for treatment of

minorities might not take precedence over the very survival of the state.

The situation facing the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe is similar to that described above.

Economic and social factors, combined with historical viewpoints have produced outbreaks of racism and discrimination, mostly directed at the Roma. Such prominent human rights organizations such as the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH), as well as Amnesty International, The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Minority Rights Watch, and the European Roma Rights Center are actively engaged in the new democracies. These organizations seek to bring Romania, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia into the European community.<sup>149</sup>

Human rights organizations are involved in such aspects of minority rights as education, police affairs, development of governmental policy, and legal representation.<sup>150</sup> The European Roma Rights Center has been exceptionally active in Central and Eastern Europe addressing legal issues, and is unique in its composition, which is by Roma for Roma, and its location in Central

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<sup>149</sup> Liegeois, Jean-Pierre and Gheorghe, Nicolae, "Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority," 15.

<sup>150</sup> Fraser, Angus, *The Gypsies*, 289.

Europe, Budapest.<sup>151</sup> It is able to effectively interact in the new democracies due its knowledge of the political situation and contacts with human rights groups of the West. Human rights organizations provide a non-confrontational method for a state to uphold or reform minority policy to international standards, enabling the new democracies to ease their entry into the European community and European security organizations.

#### **E. MEMBERSHIP IN EUROPEAN SECURITY ORGANIZATIONS**

In the continued development of the states of Romania, the Czech Republic, and Romania since 1989, one of the primary goals of their governments is acceptance by, and membership in, European security organizations. External security of the states in the new world order is a concern, as is strengthening democratic principles and developing democratic societies. Economic factors enter into the equation, as the new democracies need the economic ties, provided by such European institutions as the European Union. European security organizations and European economic organizations form an intricate interlocking web; it is difficult for a new candidate state to engage in only

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<sup>151</sup> European Roma Rights Center, "Sudden Rage at Dawn: Violence Against Roma in Romania," 1.

economic terms, or security terms, as security is intrinsic in the development of economies.

European security organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), include in their treaties, not only security issues, but also a vast range of social and political standards that must be met in order to qualify for membership.<sup>152</sup> Open, critical dialogue will be encountered by a state seeking membership, along with expectations of reform or maintenance of human rights principles. This generalization is especially true for acceptance in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The Czech Republic has been accepted in the first round of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization expansion, and the sixteen member nations monitor the adherence by the new candidates to principles. In this aspect, the Czech Republic has made extraordinary measures to improve Roma social and educational conditions.<sup>153</sup> On the contrary, Slovakia's bid was denied mostly due to human rights abuses.<sup>154</sup> Slovakia met most of the economic requirement

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<sup>152</sup> Liegeois, Jean-Pierre and Gheorghe, Nicolae, "Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority," 24.

<sup>153</sup> European Roma Rights Center, "Statement of the ERRC on the Occasion of the Acceptance into NATO of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland," 1.

<sup>154</sup> U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Department of State Background Notes, April 1998, The Slovak Republic," *Global News Bank*, 8.

for early entry into the European Union, but was also denied due to human rights abuses.<sup>155</sup> Romania, though not a front candidate for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, has not qualified due to human rights abuses and has been denied early entry into the European Union.<sup>156</sup>

Membership in European security organizations is necessary for continued democratic development of the new democracies and is vital to their economies. Adherence to international norms of minority treatment will stabilize the new democracies and eventually grant them membership in European security organizations.

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> "EU Urges Romania to Improve Treatment of Roma," *RomNews Network*, 1.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

### A. FUTURE OF THE ROMA

The future of the Roma in the Czech Republic, Romania, and Slovakia remains uncertain. The new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe have a history of oppression against the Roma that is hard to overcome. Historical bias added to the economic and social turmoil occurring with the transition from communism to democracy has led to a surge of racism and discrimination, since 1989. This phenomenon continues to the present day.

Once more the historical pattern of initial welcome of the Roma, followed by gradual intolerance, then oppression by the state is evident in Central and Eastern Europe. The pattern starts during a major change in the social, political and economic climate of a state or region. Romania, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia all experienced major changes and the Roma initially sought to gain from the change in governmental systems. However a gradual turn to intolerance is detected. This intolerance, due to many social and economic factors, must be halted before oppression occurs. The Roma must also be recognized as an ethnic minority, with the same rights as the majority and other ethnic minorities. Otherwise states will attempt to assimilate the Roma, which has proved unworkable in the



past. Integration is the best possible solution, although difficult considering the culture of the Roma and the bias of the majority population in the new democracies. Education can break the cycle of illiteracy, unemployment, high birthrate and crime that plague the Roma and perpetuate the stereotype of the Roma. But for a Roma educational program to accomplish the goal of literacy and integration, the program must take into consideration the culture of the Roma, and all areas of the Roma in society. The Roma also need recognition as an ethnic minority, if not a nationality, in order to get the governmental support necessary for such a program. The solution is long term, with patience required by both participants, the Roma and the state, and is essential if the Roma are to become integrated into the state and not continue as a security problem for the Czech Republic, Romania, and Slovakia.

**B. ETHNIC POLICY AND SECURITY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC,  
SLOVAKIA AND ROMANIA**

Security of a state is not only in terms of defense. Security encompasses the entire spectrum of society, including social and economic factors. The social condition of the Roma has affected the security of the Czech Republic, Romania, and Slovakia by creating tension between neighboring states through migration, either

political of economic, and internally, with the rise of racism and discrimination. The transition from communism to democracy brought economic and social upheaval to the states of Central and Eastern Europe. The difference experienced by the populations of the new democracies between expectations and reality have created social problems that govern the security of the state, especially in the case of the Roma.

The result has been the rise of nationalistic sentiment in Slovakia, and a rise of racism and discrimination in the Czech Republic and Romania. The Czech Republic's citizenship law reflects the problems faced by new democracies. In the quest for security the states of Central and Eastern Europe have sought membership in European security and economic organizations. However these organizations have international standards for the treatment of minorities among their members. It is not enough to have a strong economy, a state must adhere to recognized democratic principles or be in the process of developing those principles. Thus the social condition of the Roma has proved a security issue in preventing the Central and Eastern European states a swift entry in European organizations. Intervention by human rights groups has enabled changes in minority policy in the new

democracies. Eventually, with intervention and support, the new democracies of the Czech Republic, Romania, and Slovakia will address their human rights concerns and become valued members of European security and economic organizations.

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